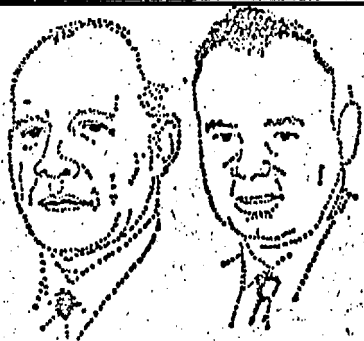


ALLEN-SCOTT REPORT

Inside Washington

By ROBERT S. ALLEN and PAUL SCOTT



CPYRGHT CPYRGHT *Blueprint for Peace*

WASHINGTON — A crucial aspect of the Johnson administration's master plan to "bring the Viet Nam conflict from the battlefield to the negotiating table" is replacing the existing military rule with a broad-based civilian "government of national reconciliation."

Consisting of an indirectly "elected" national assembly, a premier and cabinet, this regime would take the lead in seeking a negotiated termination of the fighting.

Tagged to play a key role in this intricate backstage strategy is Edward Landsdale, the controversial retired Air Force major general now back in Saigon for the announced purpose of heading a special team of U.S. advisers to the Viet Nam Central Rural Construction Council.

It is this still largely paper organization that is to be Landsdale's principal tool in setting in motion the series of developments designed to bring about the peace-aiming "government of national reconciliation."

SECRET PLAN

While congressional and other authorities know that the President and his inner advisers have a master Viet Nam "peace" plan, it is shrouded in closely-guarded secrecy. Other than vague references to it in White House briefings and the President's private talks with callers, nothing has been divulged.

The nearest a high-placed official has come to saying anything publicly about the hush-hush plan was by Walt Rostow, chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council. And his generalized and enigmatic comments are meaningless except to those with some awareness of their true import.

In a press interview while vacationing at a South Carolina resort, the one-time Massachusetts Institute of Technology economics professor said:

"Turning points are quite mysterious in wars. But our bombing strikes have made a big difference. The U.S. has three goals in Viet Nam: To help the new and younger generation of Vietnamese get settled and get started. Then to help the officials start and maintain a modern government. Third, to keep pressure on North Viet Nam through telling bombing strikes."

REVEALING DETAILS

While the administration is enforcing a tight blackout on its "peace" plan, some significant information has been pieced together. Public discussion is hampered by the highly classified nature of much of it.

But it is possible to report the following:

A major phase of the plan is a huge refugee program, under which hundreds of thousands of peasants and villagers are to be "relocated and rehabilitated." Gen. Landsdale will be in charge.

This refugee project will be very costly. Exactly how much is conjectural. But it is certain to run into hundreds of millions of dollars.

The military regime of Premier Nguyen Cao Ky, the tart-tongued young air brigadier, is to be ousted. Just how that is to be brought about is not known. It may turn out to take quite a bit of doing, as Ky, with characteristic ebullience, considers himself a "man of destiny."

MILITARY RULE

But the master plan calls for his military rule to be replaced by a civilian "government of national reconciliation."

It is to be broad-based, including Buddhists, Catholics and other elements.

It is to be brought into existence by the indirect "election" of a national assembly. As a popular election is precluded by the widespread ground fighting, it is proposed to "elect" the assembly members by having the village chiefs designate them.

This is justified on the ground that these local leaders were elected by popular ballot last year.

What, if anything, is done to keep village chiefs from naming Viet Cong to the national assembly, is another blank spot. Perhaps it is contemplated to screen the assemblymen. Perhaps not.

In any event, the national assembly will select a civilian premier who, in turn, will set up a cabinet representative of all major elements.

This presumably broad-based and U.S.-backed civilian "government of national reconciliation" will launch a two-pronged effort — to negotiate a cease-fire, and to get underway a wide-ranging economic restoration and development program, with the U.S., of course, footing the bill.

TROOP MOVE

Also envisioned is a start on withdrawing U.S. troops.

This will depend on how this concept of events works out. But as the President eagerly pictures it, the homeward redeployment of troops should be in progress by January. That's what he has been broadly hinting to congressional and other callers.

As reported in this column last week, he told a small group

of congressmen when the question was raised about the possibility of escalation of the Viet Nam conflict, "There is no serious danger of that. In fact, I think that when you come back here in January for the next session, there is a good chance we will be redeploying our troops home from Viet Nam."

Gen. Landsdale spent nine years in South Viet Nam. From 1954 to 1963 he was a powerful backstage force in keeping the late President Ngo Dinh Diem in office. Soon after Diem was assassinated in a military coup, Landsdale returned to the U.S.

While officially an Air Force officer, much of his career was spent in the Central Intelligence Agency.

FLASHES

Egypt plans to further widen and deepen the Suez Canal to enable the passage of vessels with 39-ft. draft. The Suez Canal Authority announced it proposes to get this work underway within a few months . . . The State Department is "informally" urging U. S. allies to shut off their booming shipping business to North Viet Nam. Japan has indicated willingness to cooperate, but so far little progress has been made in persuading others. Last year British and Scandinavian ships were the most numerous in this traffic.

NOTE: The boxed portions of this article did not appear in the 13 September issue of the NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUN.